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An IAF Su-30MKI, flanked by two SEPECAT Jaguars and two BAE Hawks, flies in formation as part of rehearsals ahead of Aero India 2021 at the Yelahanka Air Force Station (left); Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the inauguration of HAL's new LCA-Tejas production line in Bengaluru on Tuesday | ASHISH KISHORE/HPI, SHRIHARSH

INDIA NEED NOT DEPEND ON ANYONE: RAJNATH

HAL's LCA will lead to better surveillance along borders: Defmin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said that India cannot remain dependent on other countries for its defence needs and that the indigenously-developed Light Combat Aircraft Tejas is better than its foreign equivalents on several parameters and is comparatively cheaper.

Giving a boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Aatmanirbhar initiative, Singh, who inaugurated a state-of-the-art production line for Tejas (Plant - II) of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), said that the indigenous aircraft not only means better surveillance at borders, but also adds to the self-respect of Indians.

"HAL's new LCA facility is an example of how 'Aatmanirbhar'

har Bharat' is shaping and HAL deserves the largest indigenous order of 83 LCA Mk-1A at Rs 48,000 crore. The aircraft is the pride of India and sends the right message to others that India can make fighters of class in-house. The country will achieve the target of ₹1.75 lakh crore in the field of defence manufacturing in a few years," he said.

On biennial Aero India 2021, which is beginning here on Wednesday, he said that the air show will propel India as a defence manufacturing hub and the country will soon be the most powerful defence economy in the world. Fourteen countries are participating in Aero India 2021, which has so far got a total of 601 exhibitors, of which 523 are Indian and 78 foreign. Besides, there are 248 virtual exhibitors.

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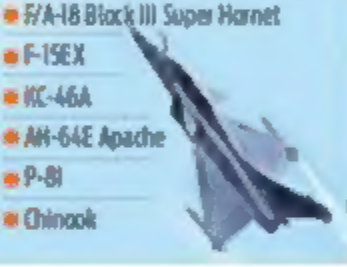
WHAT'S FLYING

IAF

- Light Combat Aircraft
- Rafale
- Sukhoi 30 MKI
- Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv
- Light Combat Helicopter
- Light Utility Helicopter
- Advanced Hawk Mk 132
- Intermediate Jet Trainer

USAF

- B-1B Lancer Heavy Bomber
- F/A-18 Block III Super Hornet
- F-15EX
- KC-46A
- AH-64E Apache
- P-8
- Chinook



Govt ready for talks, kisans harden stance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ON a day the government said it is ready to talk to the protesting farmers, agitators upped the ante and said there would be no discussion until 'harassment' by the police and administration stops and detained farmers are released.

Proceedings at Parliament were disrupted, too, with sessions in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha repeatedly adjourned following Opposition protests.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) hit out at the government for digging trenches, fixing nails on roads, setting up barbed-wire fences, and stopping internet services at protest sites.

"It appears the government is extremely fearful of the rising tide of support for the ongoing protest from different states," an SKM statement read.

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait, who has been camping at the Ghazipur border, reiterated that protests will continue until their demands are met. "This is now a fight for the freedom of farmers," he said.

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut visited Ghazipur to express solidarity.

Amid ruckus in both houses, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the "government is ready to discuss issues related to farmers inside and outside Parliament". He said the government is committed to discussing the issues. Tomar's reply came after Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury claimed 170 farmers died during the agitation.

However, SKM said it has not re-

ceived any proposal for talks. "Though no formal proposal for talks came from the government, we clearly state that talks will be held only after the unconditional release of farmers who are in illegal police custody," the statement said.

The Centre also told Lok Sabha that protesting farmers resorted to rioting, damage to property and used 'criminal force' against public servants on January 26, forcing Delhi Police to resort to tear gas, water cannons and mild force. The Lok Sabha was also informed that 39 cases were registered between September and December against the farmers.

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A farmer at the protest site at Singhu border on Tuesday | SHEKHAR YADAV

115 in jails, claims morcha

Samyukt Kisan Morcha said 115 farmers are in jail, but according to the Punjab CM, 70 are in Delhi jails, while five are missing.

Delhi Police said the heightened security measures at city borders were to ensure they cannot be broken again by protesters.

Tomar said 'no' to an LS question on whether the government will compensate families of farmers who died in the ongoing protests.

KARNATAKA STICKS TO COVID CURBS AT CINEMAS, EVENTS

The Karnataka Government has mandated that cinema halls shall continue with 50% seating capacity till Feb 28.

For cultural events in any 1,000 sq metre area, a maximum of 376 people are allowed. Not more than 500 people are allowed at any event.

Swimming and sports events to function as per Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports guidelines.



Makhan everyone happy!



CAA may not come into play before West Bengal elections

SANA SHAKIL @ New Delhi

THE contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) may not be implemented at least till July as the committees on subordinate legislation of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have been granted extension up to April 9 and July 9, respectively, by the Ministry of Home Affairs to frame its rules.

In other words, it will not come into play before the West Bengal elections that are expected in April-May. The numerically significant Matua community the BJP is banking on in Bengal, has been pressing the party to implement the CAA immediately. But the Centre is in no hurry as the CAA passed in December 2019 amid unprecedented chaos in Parliament, led to violent protests across the country.

Junior home minister Nityanand Rai told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that the rules were still "under preparation". He was responding to questions by Congress member V K Sreekandan. "The Committees on Subordinate Legislation, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have granted extension of time up to April 9 and July 9, respectively, to frame these rules under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019," he said.

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